

News from the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control.
**NEWS FROM THE DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL
CONTROL**

Dec. 21, 2009

Vol. 39, No. 476

For more information contact Jennifer Wheatley, Shoreline and Waterway Management Section, Division of Soil and Water Conservation, 302-739-9921; or Melanie Rapp, Public Affairs, 302-739-9902.

**Protect coastal areas by not placing old Christmas trees on sand dunes
Trees Can Be Recycled at a yard waste drop-off site or state park Dec. 26 – Jan. 18**

DNREC's Shoreline and Waterway Management Section urges the public to protect Delaware's ocean and bay coastal areas by not placing Christmas trees on sand dunes. Old trees left on dunes will kill beach grass and other vegetation and can result in destroying a sand dune.

"When dead trees and brush are added to a dune, beach grass and other vegetation can be smothered," said Jennifer Wheatley, environmental scientist with DNREC's Shoreline and Waterway Management Section. "Beach grass that is damaged or destroyed is no longer efficient in trapping and holding sand, and wind erosion of the dune can occur. In addition, dead trees and brush are fire hazards, which can lead to the destruction of established dunes and wildlife habitat. By keeping Christmas trees off dunes, we help protect sand dunes which are so valuable to our coastal areas."

Sand dunes protect coastal areas from storm surges, waves and wind. They are important to protect structures and property during storm events by providing sand to eroding beaches and by blocking advancing water. Dunes reduce beach erosion, and therefore, protect wildlife habitat, property and lives.

Instead of placing trees on dunes, old trees can be recycled at DNREC's community yard waste drop-off sites in New Castle County or at three Delaware State Parks in Kent and Sussex Counties. Trees and other greens, free of ornaments, wire and tinsel will be accepted Dec. 26 – Jan. 18 from Delaware residents only. No trees will be accepted from commercial haulers. To help defray costs, the state parks will accept donations of \$2.

Sussex County

Trap Pond State Park

33587 Baldcypress Lane, Laurel

Hours: Daily; 8 a.m. - sunset

Cape Henlopen State Park

15099 Cape Henlopen Drive, Lewes

Hours: Daily; 8 a.m. – sunset

DNREC's Division of Soil and Water Conservation has worked for many years to establish and maintain dunes along Delaware's coastline using sand fences and native vegetation. In addition, for the past 20 years, DNREC's annual beach grass planting event has brought together thousands of dedicated volunteers who plant beach grass in an effort to protect dunes. The 21st annual beach grass planting event is scheduled for March 20, 2010.

For more information, on shoreline and waterway management projects, visit www.swc.dnrec.delaware.gov and click on "Coastal Connection Newsletter – Fall 2009 issue."

For information on yard waste drop-off sites and recycling alternatives, visit DNREC's website, www.dnrec.delaware.gov and click on "Yard Waste" or contact Rob Underwood, 302-739-9403; Robert.Underwood@state.de.us.

For more information on the state park tree recycling program, contact Gary Focht, 302-382-4616 or Gary.Focht@state.de.us.